

Colon and Rectal Cancer

Colon and rectal cancer usually start from polyps. Over time, some polyps can become cancerous. Removing polyps can help prevent cancer of the colon and rectum.

Read more at www.cancer.gov.

Who develops colon polyps?

Anyone can develop colon polyps; however, some people are more likely to develop them than others. You may have a greater chance of developing polyps if

- you're 50 years of age or older
- you've had polyps before
- someone in your family has had polyps or cancer of the colon or rectum

If you're African American, you are more likely to develop cancerous polyps. You are also more likely to develop cancerous polyps before age 50.

People with certain health problems are more likely to develop polyps. You may have a greater chance of developing polyps if you have

- **inflammatory bowel disease**—the general name for diseases that cause inflammation and irritation in the intestines. The most common types of inflammatory bowel disease are **ulcerative colitis** and **Crohn's disease**.
- type 2 diabetes. Diabetes means your blood glucose, also called blood sugar, is too high. Type 2 diabetes, formerly called adult-onset diabetes, is the most common form of diabetes.
- a history of breast, uterine, or ovarian cancer.



You may have a greater chance of polyps if someone in your family has had polyps.

You may also be more likely to develop colon polyps if you

- weigh too much
- eat a lot of fatty foods; red meats, such as beef and pork; or processed meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and lunch meats
- don't exercise
- smoke cigarettes
- drink alcohol

Who should be screened for colon polyps?

Most people should start colon polyp screening at age 50. African Americans should start screening at age 45. Screening is testing for diseases when you have no symptoms. Finding and removing polyps can help prevent cancer of the colon or rectum.

Your doctor may recommend screening before age 45 or 50 if

- you have symptoms
- someone in your family has had polyps or cancer of the colon or rectum
- you have other factors that increase your chances for developing polyps